



BEVERLY HILLS EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Educational Employees Working Together

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Speech on personal versus business affairs delivered by BHEA Pres. Chris Bushée at the September 8, 2009 Board of Education meeting:

“Members of the Board of Education and administrative staff, good evening. I support and the organization I represent supports school board member Brian Goldberg. During the two years that Dr. Goldberg has been in office, we have had frequent, open communication about the issues facing our district. Dr. Goldberg has worked tirelessly to research information and make it available to the community. He has articulated his positions on issues by engaging in dialog with community members. He has provided rationale for his viewpoints. He has identified strengths and weaknesses in our district. He has championed fiscal discipline and high academic standards for our students. He has been bold in his approach to make needed improvements to areas of our district. His clarion call last year for more transparency and even-handedness in the awarding of Measure E contracts was not heeded by the majority of this Board, and now our district finds itself in the midst of a legal battle on this very subject. How many thousands of dollars will our district have to spend on legal fees to see this Measure E lawsuit through to its finality?

“Brian Goldberg has taken his job as an elected school board member seriously, professionally, and with conviction. He has not wavered in his principles and has offered the community no less than what he said during his campaign, and by some measures...more. He has taken a spotlight to the district’s budget and questioned priorities on how taxpayer money is spent. He has voted for more money for our classrooms and less on administrative overhead. He has championed not just high, but the highest academic standards for our district and has advocated for inclusion of teachers’ ideas and experience in reaching these goals. Brian Goldberg is true to his beliefs and sticks to them through thick and thin.

“How do school board members act like democratically elected representatives of the people? Research and be knowledgeable of the issues. Hold true to your convictions. Come together with your colleagues. Vigorously debate the issues. Find common ground and compromise. Vote on the big issues of the day and let the majority win, take credit, and be held accountable. You create the best opportunities for advancing our district’s mission when you have respect for each other’s elected status, even if your politics diverge.

“And so, it saddens me to read in the local press that at least one sitting school Board member has admitted to spending some of her time and energy prying into the personal life of Dr. Goldberg. Creating distractions. Pontificating on ethics with a ‘holier-than-thou’ attitude. Sure. I get it. It’s more spectacular and salacious to hang some sort of scarlet letter on a colleague than it is to try to work with him. It’s easier to poke holes in someone’s personal character than it is to defend your vote on a Measure E contract. Sure. I get it. But will our district’s students get it, too? Will they see their school board acting at its finest, the way this democratic institution is meant to function? Or will they see it at its worst, a side show carnival of a cut-throat politician salivating over the chance to destroy her colleague over a private matter that has absolutely nothing to do with managing our district? What behavior will our students emulate? Stop the witch hunt and get back to dealing with the business of our district. Thank you.”